

NEWS FROM SCDCA

South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs



Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston, Administrator

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Consumer Agency Warns Meat Scams Headed to South Carolina Again

Columbia, SC...The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) announced that consumers should protect themselves from door-to-door or other unsavory meat sales, following reports of such activity in the upstate last week.

“Everyone likes a good bargain,” said SCDCA Administrator Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston, “but door-to-door sales of meat and poultry and those sold from roadside or parking lot vendors often violate codes and possibly have health safety risks as well.”

Pinkston said these types of meat and poultry sales are cyclical and sometimes seasonal. “You may have seen sellers such as this on the highway or in your neighborhood,” she said. “Many times they’re in pickup trucks with an ordinary freezer in the bed. Unless it’s in a refrigeration unit, the meat in the unplugged freezer is slowly thawing,” she explained. “Yet often the unsold meat is simply taken back to a warehouse and re-frozen for the next day’s rounds.”

Other meat sale scams take the form of sellers going door-to-door with convincing sales pitches for bargain prices on bulk meats. The meat is often inferior and not restaurant-quality as advertised, the weight is not as described, and the price ends up higher than promised.

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About the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs:

Established by the Consumer Protection code in 1974, The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs represents the interests of South Carolina Consumers. Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education.

For more information, visit www.sccoconsumer.gov.

Also, the consumer is frequently not advised of a three-day right to cancel for purchases made in the home over \$25, as specified by the Federal Trade Commission.

The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs warns of these meat sale pitfalls:

- Health risks associated with improper handling practices
- Meat not being USDA-inspected or unit-weight priced, both required by law
- Multiple packaging disguising inferior quality, different cuts, or lower weights
- Seller may not have a permanent location and may fail to respond to consumer complaints
- Contracts with expensive high-interest payment plans hidden in fine print

Consumers can fight back by asking the vendor for literature to review and not falling for high pressure pitches designed for a quick sale. Consumers who suspect scams of this sort should contact the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs immediately by calling 1.800.922.1594 or visiting its website: www.scconsumer.gov to file a complaint.

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